



★★★America's Heroes at Work

Supporting the Employment Success of Veterans with TBI & PTSD

FHP&R VSO-MSO Roundtable Meeting

March 19, 2009

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U.S. Department of Labor



★★★ Invisible Wounds of War



- **Signature injuries** of the Global War on Terror
- Nearly **one in five** veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars is currently dealing with depression or stress disorders
- **19%** of troops say they might have experienced a TBI, usually as the result of a roadside bomb

Source: RAND Corporation, 2008



★★★ Effects of TBI/PTSD

Both can have similar symptoms and behaviors, which **can** include...

- Headaches
- Vertigo
- Balance problems
- Anxiety
- Sleep disturbance
- Short-term memory deficits
- Poor concentration
- Poor decision-making difficulties



★★★ Impacting Employment



- TBI/PTSD symptoms can sometimes cause difficulties as service men and women transition back into civilian life – especially in the workplace
- Simple workplace supports can help wounded and injured veterans succeed on the job
- **Employment** can play a major role in recovery



★★★ Defining TBI & PTSD

- **Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) -**

A blow or jolt to the head or a penetrating head injury that disrupts the function of the brain.

- **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) -**

An anxiety disorder that can develop in response to exposure to an extreme traumatic event (e.g., military combat, violent personal assaults, terrorist attacks, natural or man-made disasters, or horrific accidents). The event, directly experienced or witnessed in another person, involves actual or threatened death, serious injury or threat to one's physical integrity.



★★★ Dispelling the Myths



All TBIs are severe.



★★★ Dispelling the Myths

False

- “TBI” is an umbrella term that spans a wide continuum of symptoms and severity
- The large majority (80%) of combat head injuries sustained in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom are mild concussions as opposed to severe, debilitating TBI
- Of those, another 80% will have a full recovery



★★★ Dispelling the Myths



Employees with PTSD will have outbursts that disrupt the workplace.



★★★ Dispelling the Myths

False

- People with PTSD do **not** necessarily pose a direct threat to themselves or others
- PTSD develops differently in different people and most **symptoms will decrease** over time
- Employees who manage their symptoms through medication or psychotherapy are very **unlikely to pose a threat**
- Employers can **mitigate vulnerabilities** to stress by providing a job accommodation.



★★★ Dispelling the Myths



Employees with TBI or PTSD
will need significant,
expensive
job accommodations.



★★★ Dispelling the Myths

False

- Not all people with TBI and/or PTSD will need accommodations
- Workplace supports are generally **simple and inexpensive** to implement
- By employing a veteran with TBI or PTSD, businesses can contribute to his/her recovery and experience **bottom line benefits** from an experienced veteran employee





What's Support is Available?

RECOVERY

ASSISTIVE
TECHNOLOG
Y

HEALTHCARE
SERVICES &
SUPPORT

EDUCATION

REHABILITATION

FAMILY/
CAREGIVE
R
SERVICES

MENTAL HEALTH
SERVICES

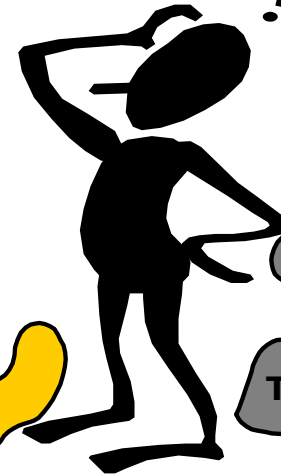
REINTEGRATION

VOCATIONAL
REHABILITATIO
N

BENEFITS

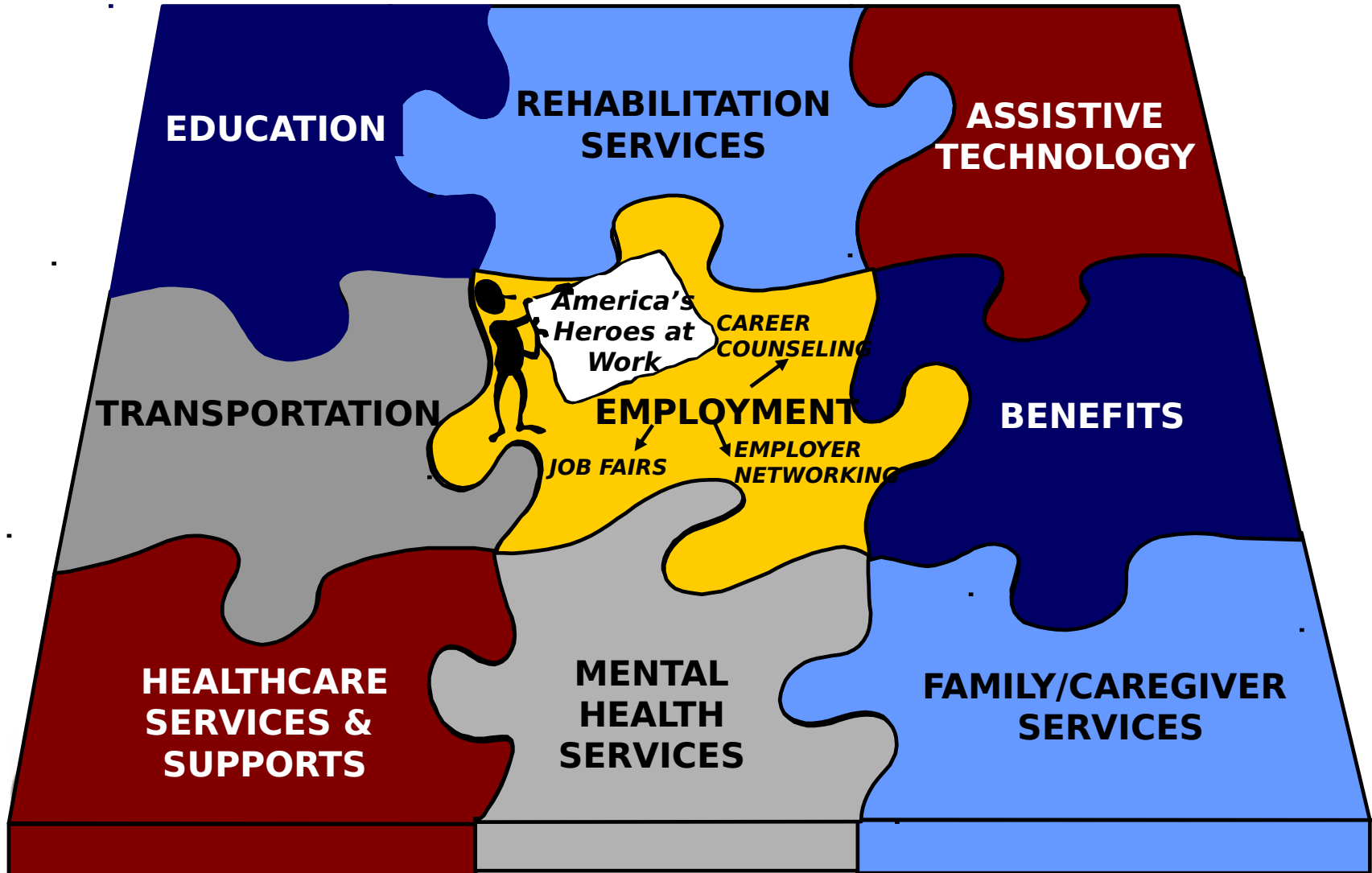
EMPLOYMENT

TRANSPORTATIO
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A Collaborative Approach



★★★ An Educational Initiative



**The U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL)
response:**



☆☆☆ Goals



- To help returning service members and veterans with TBI/PTSD succeed in the workplace
- To increase awareness of TBI/PTSD employment issues among employers, the workforce development system, service branches, key military support systems, VSOs and One-Stop Career Centers
- To create and raise awareness of resources that assist **employers** with accommodations for transitioning service members and veterans with TBI/PTSD



- Joint leadership by ODEP & VETS
- Collaboration with other DOL agencies
- Input and cooperation from partner federal agencies
 - Department of Defense
 - Department of Veterans Affairs
 - Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health & Traumatic Brain Injury
 - Defense & Veterans Brain Injury Center
 - Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse & Mental Health Service Administration
 - Department of Education
 - Department of Transportation
 - Employer Support for the Guard & Reserve
 - National Institute of Mental Health
 - Social Security Administration
 - Small Business Administration
 - Uniformed Services Branches
 - Others



★★★ Target Audience

- Audience
 - **Employers**
- Reached Through the Following Channels:
 - Workforce development community
 - Federal government agencies
 - Disability organizations
 - Veteran & military organizations
 - Business & human resource organizations
 - Public policy organizations
 - Trade organizations
 - Media outlets



★★★ Toll-Free Assistance



- **Job Accommodation Network (JAN)**
 - **800-526-7234 (voice) or 877-781-9403 (TTY)**
 - **Offers free, personal assistance to employers on issues related to veterans with disabilities, including:**
 - Reasonable job accommodations
 - Workplace productivity enhancements
 - Information regarding the ADA & other disability legislation
 - Much more





www.AmericasHeroesAtWork.g

ov America's Heroes at Work

**AMERICA'S
HEROES AT WORK**

ODEP
Office of Disability
Employment Policy

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

HireVetsFirst

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America's Heroes at Work
**Supporting the Employment Success of Returning
Service Members with TBI & PTSD**

Welcome to *America's Heroes at Work* - a U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) project that focuses on the employment challenges of returning service members living with **Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)** and/or **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)**.

Designed for **employers** and the **workforce development system**, this Web site is your link to **information** and **tools** to help returning service members affected by TBI and/or PTSD succeed in the workplace - particularly service members returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

In Focus
Following a TBI sustained in Iraq, Gorman P. was unable to return to his former civilian job as a truck driver. So he enrolled in the Transition Training Academy (TTA), a pilot project for disabled veterans that teaches marketable information technology (IT) skills. Today, he has a rewarding IT job with Universal Understanding LLC.

**Learn How to Help
Employees with
TBI/PTSD Succeed**
From simple workplace supports to job coaching and mentoring programs, employers can play a vital role in the recovery and rehabilitation of people with TBI and/or PTSD. [Learn More >](#)

**Learn How to Hire
a Veteran**
Helpful resources to help you recruit, hire and retain qualified veteran employees. [Learn More >](#)

[LEARN MORE](#)

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Internet



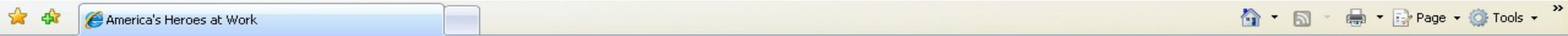
★★★ Web Site Features

- **Common employer questions** about returning service members with TBI and/or PTSD
- **Fact sheets** and **reference guides** on TBI & PTSD as they relate to employment
- Web-based **training tools** on making workplace accommodations for employees with TBI/PTSD
- **Promising practices** for helping those with TBI/PTSD succeed at work
- Veterans employment **success stories**
- **Links** to additional TBI, PTSD and veterans employment resources





Resources Web Page



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Resources

Employers and workforce development professionals can play a powerful role in the recovery and rehabilitation of returning service members with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and/or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Often, the on-the-job challenges of TBI and PTSD can be addressed with simple supports such as alarm clocks, scheduled rest breaks, memory/time management aids, adaptive technology and lighting adjustments. Other promising practices include [job sharing](#), [coaching](#) and [mentoring programs](#).

To learn more, select from our downloadable [fact sheets](#), [training tools](#) and real-life [success stories](#), or begin with a general overview by reviewing the frequently asked questions below.

Common Employer Questions About Returning Service Members with TBI and/or PTSD

**Click on questions to expand or collapse answers.*

The Basics:

- [What is a TBI?](#)
- [What is PTSD?](#)
- [What are the symptoms of a TBI?](#)
- [Are all TBIs severe?](#)
- [What are the symptoms of PTSD?](#)
- [What should employers expect from a person with PTSD? Will they have violent outbursts?](#)
- [There's a lot of negative stigma associated with PTSD. How can employers separate myth from fact?](#)

Fact Sheets & Reference Guides

- [Accommodating Employees with TBI](#)
- [Accommodating Employees with PTSD](#)
- [PTSD: Dispelling the Myths](#)
- [Top Ten Reasons to Hire a Veteran](#)

[More >](#)

Presentations & Training Tools

- [Hiring and Accommodating Veterans with Disabilities \(webcast\)](#)
- [Understanding TBI \(video\)](#)

[More >](#)

Success Stories

Read about promising practices in action >>

★★★ Common Employer Questions

- Examples of **common employer questions**:
 - Are TBI and PTSD conditions that are exclusive to veterans?
 - Are TBI and PTSD considered disabilities under the ADA?
 - Are employees with TBI and/or PTSD required to disclose their disability to employers?
 - What promising practices can DOL recommend to employers who might be hesitant to hire a veteran with TBI and/or PTSD?
 - What should employers do if they suspect an employee is struggling with the effects of TBI and/or PTSD?
 - Why do veterans make great employees?
 - How can employers find and hire a disabled veteran?
 - What are the tax incentives for hiring a disabled veteran?





Fact Sheets & Reference Guides Web Page



A screenshot of a web browser displaying the 'America's Heroes at Work' website. The browser's address bar shows 'America's Heroes at Work'. The website has a dark blue header with the logo and navigation links: Home, About Us, Resources (highlighted), and Links. A banner image shows two smiling men in hard hats. The main content area is titled 'Fact Sheets & Reference Guides' and includes sections for Basic Information, Workplace Accommodations, and Best Practices for Employment Success. A sidebar on the right contains 'Help for Employers' and 'Other Educational Resources'.

Navigation links: [Contact Us](#) | [News Room](#) | [Email to a Friend](#)

Home | **About Us** | **Resources** | **Links**

Fact Sheets & Reference Guides

Basic Information

- [Frequently Asked Questions About TBI & Employment](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions About PTSD & Employment](#)
- [Dispelling the Myths About PTSD](#)

Workplace Accommodations

- [Accommodating Employees with TBI](#)
- [Accommodating Employees with PTSD](#)
- [Accommodation and Compliance Series: Employees with Traumatic Brain Injury](#)
- [Accommodation and Compliance Series: Employees with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder](#)

Best Practices for Employment Success

- [Job Coaching - A Best Practice for Supporting Returning Service Members with TBI/PTSD](#)
- [Workplace Mentoring - A Best Practice for Supporting Returning Service Members](#)

Help for Employers

For personal assistance related to job accommodations for veterans with disabilities call the [Job Accommodation Network \(JAN\)](#) 800-526-7234 (voice and TTY)

Other Educational Resources

- ➔ [Common Employer Questions](#)
- ➔ [Presentations & Training Tools](#)
- ➔ [Success Stories](#)

★★★ Fact Sheets & Reference Guides



- Frequently Asked Questions About TBI & Employment
- Frequently Asked Questions About PTSD & Employment
- Dispelling the Myths About PTSD
- Accommodating Employees with TBI
- Accommodating Employees with PTSD
- Promising Practices: Job Coaching; Mentoring; Training, Supervision & Other Natural Workplace Supports; Customized Employment
- Do's and Don'ts for Hiring Managers
- Tips for Communicating with People with TBI/PTSD
- Employers and the ADA: Myths and Facts



★★★ Examples of Accommodations for TBI

- Permit flexible scheduling, allow longer or more frequent work breaks
- Provide additional time to learn new responsibilities
- Allow for use of supportive employment and job coaches
- Provide for job sharing opportunities
- Encourage the employee to use daily TO-DO lists and check items off as they are completed
- Provide a special calendar to mark meetings and deadlines
- Assign a mentor to assist employee in determining goals and provide daily guidance
- Provide written as well as verbal instructions



★★★ Examples of Accommodations for PTSD



- Use a daily or weekly task list
- Reduce distractions in the work environment
- Allow the employee to play soothing music using a headset
- Divide large assignments into smaller goal-oriented tasks or steps
- Assign a supervisor, manager or mentor to answer employee's questions
- Use stress management techniques to deal with frustration
- Allow telephone calls during work hours to doctors and others for needed support
- Allow for a flexible start time or end time, or work from home

Allow time off for counseling



★★★ Helpful Tips for Hiring Veterans with TBI and/or PTSD

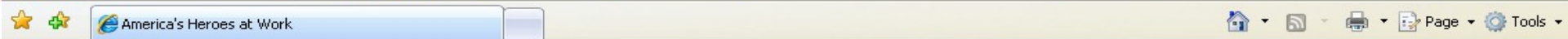


- Follow these **helpful hints** to guide you through the hiring process:
 - **Do** learn where to find and recruit veterans with TBI or PTSD
 - **Do** learn how to communicate with persons who have TBI or PTSD
 - **Do** provide reasonable accommodations that the qualified applicant will need to compete for the job
 - **Do** treat an individual with TBI or PTSD the same way you would treat any applicant or employee with dignity and respect
 - **Do** know that among those protected by the ADA are qualified individuals who have TBI or PTSD
 - **Do** understand that access includes not only environmental access, but also making forms accessible to people with cognitive or psychological disabilities
 - **Do** train supervisors on making reasonable accommodations





Success Stories Web Page



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Success Stories

Employers throughout the nation and the world are hiring transitioning service members with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and/or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and they're learning valuable promising practices along the way. The following success stories highlight real-life examples of employers and veterans working together to create winning, mutually beneficial workplace environments.

Veteran Employees

- Gary Boggs - Northrop Grumman
- Mike Bradley - Halfaker & Associates
- Ryan Kules - Wounded Warrior Project
- Bill Martin - Booz Allen Hamilton
- Gorman P. - Universal Understanding LLP

Employers

- Nicole Bazemore - Booz Allen Hamilton
- Dawn Halfaker - Halfaker & Associates
- Duane Hardesty - Northrop Grumman
- Joe Valenzano - Exceptional Parent Magazine

*** More success stories coming soon. Check back for updates. ***

Send us a Success Story

Know of another TBI or PTSD employment success story?

Send it to

AmericasHeroesAtWork@dol.gov

Other Educational Resources

- ➔ [Common Employer Questions](#)
- ➔ [Fact Sheets & Reference Guides](#)
- ➔ [Presentations & Training Tools](#)





Helpful Links Web Page



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Helpful Links

Information on TBI & PTSD Symptoms & Treatment

- **Brain Injury Association**
Provides information, education and support to assist the 5.3 million Americans currently living with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and their families. Call toll-free 1-800-444-6443 for brain injury information.
- **Defense Centers of Excellence (DCoE) for Psychological Health (PH) & Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)**
A DCoE collaborative effort toward optimizing PH and TBI treatment for the Defense Department. Establishes quality standards for clinical care; education and training; prevention; patient, family and community outreach; and program excellence.
- **Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center (DVBIC)**
Serves active duty military, their dependents and veterans with TBI through state-of-the-art medical care, innovative clinical research initiatives and educational programs.
- **Facts About Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)**
General information on TBI from the Brain Injury Association of America.
- **Gateway to PTSD Information**
Comprehensive gateway to information on PTSD from four organizations. Includes articles, guides, Web links, mini-courses, 800 phone access and e-mail pen-pal resources.

Help for Employers

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Other Educational Resources

- ➔ [Common Employer Questions](#)
- ➔ [Fact Sheets & Reference Guides](#)
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★★★ Employment Pilot Project



- **Goals of the Employment Pilot:**
 - To improve the employment outcomes of veterans with TBI and PTSD
 - To test and validate replicable practices for helping employees with TBI and PTSD succeed in the workplace
 - To provide employers with training and resources to assist them in their hiring and retention efforts, and to develop educational materials based on pilot outcomes
 - To continue and enhance cooperative working relationships with key federal partners
 - **Participants:**
 - Private sector employers and federal employers
 - Qualified veterans with a range of severity of TBI and/or PTSD
- Steering Committee comprised of federal partners



★★★ Veteran Participants: Criteria



Criteria for Veteran Candidates to Participate:

- A service-connected diagnosis of TBI and /or PTSD (self-disclosed)
- A desire to work and live in the Greater Washington, D.C. area
- A record of having served on active duty military after September 11, 2001
- A willingness to share their on-the-job experiences for the purpose of helping other veterans



★★★ Veteran Participants: Benefits



- **The America's Heroes at Work team will help Veteran Participants:**
 - Identify career goals
 - Explore possible workplace accommodations to help participants succeed on the job
 - Develop a quality civilian resume
 - Prepare for job interviews
 - Connection with career opportunities
 - Through ongoing support and follow-up services to ensure success



★★★ Employer Participants: Criteria

Criteria for Employer Candidates to Participate:

- Have a physical location in the Greater Washington, D.C. metropolitan area
- Employ 100 or more workers
- Have current workforce needs or job openings
- Be willing to be part of a “learning lab” environment whereby best practices can be studied and replicated



★★★ Employer Participants: Benefits



- **The America's Heroes at Work team will help Employer Participants:**
 - Identify current organizational and human capital needs
 - Find committed, highly-qualified veteran job candidates to fill company needs
 - Recognize need for job carving or customized employment services
 - Implement specific accommodations for veteran employees with disabilities
 - Through ongoing support and follow-up services



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